



United States  
of America

# Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 114<sup>th</sup> CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION

Vol. 162

WASHINGTON, WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 14, 2016

No. 139

## Senate

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. HATCH).

### PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Creator of life, You are from everlasting to everlasting. We lift our voices in thanksgiving, for You satisfy humanity's spiritual hunger. Today, we remember Your guidance that we do not live by bread alone but by Your Words that nourish and sustain us.

Feed our lawmakers with Heaven's bread. May their labors produce a harvest of faith, hope, and love. Lord, give them the grace to cherish and cultivate the virtues and values tested and confirmed in the cubicle of life's daily struggle. Nourished by You, may the earthly labors of our Senators fulfill a Heavenly purpose.

We pray in Your sacred Name. Amen.

### PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The President pro tempore led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

### RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. PAUL). The Democratic leader is recognized.

### MOVING OUR COUNTRY FORWARD

Mr. REID. Mr. President, by now most Americans are well acquainted with Donald Trump but especially Donald Trump's head-scratching slogan "Make America Great Again." He has his little hat he wears when he doesn't want his hair to get messed up. That

slogan offers a peek inside the minds of Donald Trump and his Republican followers in Congress. These Republicans want to believe our country isn't great. They want to believe this Nation is foundering. They don't want to listen to the facts; they just want to follow Trump.

Earlier this year Speaker RYAN echoed Donald Trump when he said, in criticizing President Obama, "We think that the President's policies aren't working. . . . We have flat wages."

Why do Republicans spend so much time rooting against economic growth and ignoring millions of newly insured Americans' access to health care? Why do they root daily against America? Because they say anything to convince their radical base that President Obama is failing, even though the facts are contrary.

Despite what Donald Trump and the congressional Republicans say, we know that America is great already, and because of Democratic policies, we are improving it every day, in spite of the obstacles—filibuster, filibuster, filibuster, obstacle, obstacle, obstacle.

Let's look at the facts. Yesterday the Census Bureau reported that median household incomes grew by 5.2 percent last year. That is the single largest annual income gain ever recorded—ever recorded. Isn't America great? Every major income bracket in our country saw an increase in earnings, with the lowest 10th percentile seeing the biggest gains. This is real progress for all Americans. Really, isn't America great? These remarkable income gains hold true across racial lines as well. In just 1 year, Hispanics saw a 6.1-percent increase in earnings. African Americans experienced a 4.1-percent jump in income. Isn't America great? This is the kind of wage growth we should celebrate, but Republicans have been totally silent because they want America not to be great. They can all start wearing the hats when they want to cover their hair.

For the first time since 1999, we are moving in the right direction on income, health care coverage, and poverty indicators. Household incomes are rising and the poverty rate is falling. That is good. Isn't America great? We are finally regaining the ground we lost during the great recession, which was at the end of the Bush administration. It really started a couple of years after he became President. In 2015 the official poverty rate dropped more than a full percentage point. That means 2 million Americans were lifted out of poverty. Real average weekly earnings have risen at their fastest pace in 15 years. Isn't America great? Yes, it is.

These incredible statistics show how much progress we have made in spite of the obstacles, the filibusters, and they show how much Americans would have to lose from a Trump Presidency that works solely for the rich and completely ignores the middle class because daily Donald Trump is rooting for failure, as are his Republican adherents.

Yesterday's census data also corrects Republicans' false narrative on the Affordable Care Act, on ObamaCare. Because of ObamaCare, more Americans have health insurance than ever before in the history of this country. According to the Census Bureau, the uninsured rate has plummeted in virtually every State. California saw the biggest drop, with a decline of 8.6 percent of those uninsured. Nevada was second, with an 8.4 percentage point drop. Really, isn't ObamaCare great? If other Republican Governors would follow the lead of the Republican Governor in Nevada, they would have the same statistics.

Thanks to the Affordable Care Act, the Republican leader's home State of Kentucky had the third largest reduction in the number of uninsured people—a decrease of 8.3 percentage points. Isn't ObamaCare great? The Republican leader loves to come to the floor and bash ObamaCare. He was here

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



Printed on recycled paper.

S5681